

*DA/ CARE CENTER*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: U.S. Department of Labor Day Care Center

DATE AND PLACE OF MEETING: 30 September 1981, Dept. of Labor

PARTICIPANTS: Ruth Nadel, Women's Bureau, DOL  
 [redacted] Federal Women's Program Officer/DAI  
 [redacted] Office of Logistics  
 [redacted] FWP/NFAC Working Group  
 joined later - Spence Fillerman, Director [redacted], DOL

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1. We met first with Mrs. Nadel who gave us background information on the Department of Labor Day Care Center (DOLDCC). The Center originally was funded as an employment-related demonstration project. The Center is now run as a private entity and is self-supporting. On the day of our visit, for example, the Parents Association was holding a "garage and bake" sale in the lobby of the Labor Department. Agriculture Department had recently withdrawn its meal reimbursement funding and the DOLDCC was having to raise an additional \$13,000 to patch the hole in its budget.

2. Mrs. Nadel briefly described other federally-sited day care programs with which she was familiar. The HEW facility began as a child-development demonstration project. EEOC began its center as an affirmative action project. The HUD center required a special rider on a legislative appropriations bill. NASA's day care program started as an employee interest club. In every case, the responsibility for the program was eventually assumed by a parents group.

3. Planning for the DOLDCC began in the Women's Bureau with a work committee composed of representatives from the Federal Women's Program, EEO interests and employee-parents. DOL management was supportive of the program and committee members were allowed the use of administrative leave to work on DOLDCC problems. The use of such leave was negotiated by contract with the employee union. The same union contract specifies

that the Center, as a non-profit corporation, leases its space from DOL at no cost to the Center. The work committee used contract consultants for special needs such as the actual design of the Center. Funding was procured by a member of the committee who worked on the <sup>staff of the</sup> Secretary of Labor ~~staff~~. Space for the Center was reserved when the present DOL building was in the planning stages, but the work committee encountered many roadblocks stemming from GSA regulations and requirements.

4. Mrs. Nadel then invited us to tour the Center itself. We met Michael Bates, a DOL employee who is the Chairman of the DOLDCC Board of Directors. She is a lawyer who has a child enrolled in the Center. She gave us additional information on the operation of the Center. There are 88 children using the Center, which has a capacity of 110. There is a waiting list of people wanting to use the Center, but the Board feels that 88 is their optimum capacity with present staffing. When the Center was a demonstration project, a sliding fee scale was required. Now, as a self-supporting corporation run by a nine-member Board, the Center has <sup>fee</sup> two scales:

18 months to 3 yrs - \$52 (<sup>soon</sup> going to be raised to \$62.50)

3 through 5 yrs - \$42 (<sup>soon</sup> going to be raised to \$47.50)

The rates are for all day; no part-time proration is available. The staffing ratio complies with ~~any~~ local requirements:

~~18 months to 3 yrs~~ infants & 1 teacher for 3/4 children

older than infants & 1 teacher for 7/10 children

All but two of their teachers have degrees in early childhood education. The kindergarten for 5 year olds is fully licensed and accredited. The Center is open 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day. Food service is catered, but the Board is planning to hire additional personnel and take over the food preparation on-site. Mrs. Bates gave us copies of the Center's Parent

Handbook and the corporation by-laws.

5. Mrs. Nadel then introduced us to Spence Fillerman, Director of <sup>?</sup>, who briefed us on management's view of the Center. He has been involved in and supportive of the Center since its inception. DOL has been trying to help <sup>build</sup> ~~with~~ an outside play area for the Center, but contractor problems persist. Also, the Fine Arts Staff has been a hinderance in designing the outside play area. Mr. Fillerman saw GSA regulations and restraints as another problem in running the Center. He thought the DOLDCC would <sup>already</sup> continue since it <sup>has</sup> a life of its own" but suggested the time may not be propitious for those of us interested in initiating a similar facility.

STAT 6.  asked about cost factors in the space being used by the Center. Mr. Fillerman said the funding was "marginally more expensive but not way out of line." There was extra heat/ventilation required due to high ceilings. A full kitchen had to be installed. There was an extra exit needed because of fire code regulations. He estimated total conversion costs at \$150,000, excluding equipment.

7. Mrs. Nadel suggested we research our own Agency's charter for a possible rationale to justify a center. Be creative, she urged. She offered help in gathering information on day care as related to attrition rates, productivity, and absenteeism. She gave us hints at cost cutting;

- DOLDCC uses students from local colleges/universities as aides for special programs;
- their Center has an agreement with Howard University to provide dental care to the children;
- their Center uses the ~~extra~~ employee health care facilities in DOL to cover the medical needs of the children.

- if the Agency had its own nutritionist, we might ask to share those services.

Finally, she provided us with a new paper, "Management Training for Governing Boards and Directors of Child Care Centers," which was a project written in concert by the four boards of downtown D.C. federally-sited centers.

DAY CARE CENTER  
FILE

# REAGANOMICS



**"Hurry up, Dave. There's a child-care center in Wheaton you missed."**

178 *The Washingtonian*/October 1981